



# Avondale council candidates agree growth, transportation are areas of concern

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Mayor Marie Lopez Rogers and Councilwoman Betty Lynch are vying for the mayoral seat in Avondale's primary election on Tuesday.

Meanwhile, incumbent Ken Weise, Jim McDonald and Stephanie Karlin are running for three open seats on the City Council. Their victories are virtually assured. The mayor and council members are elected to four-year terms.

We asked the three council candidates to talk about their priorities and what they would change about Avondale. Here are their answers.

## Ken Weise

**Age:** 41

**Family:** Shari, 42; Lauren, 12; Delaney, 10.

**How long have you lived in Avondale:** 12 years.

**Occupation:** Director of corporate contracts.

**Education:** Some college.

**Political experience:** Appointed to the Avondale City Council in January 2006.

**Most significant issue facing Avondale:** Transportation. The funding of the I-10 and the placement of the 801 (the proposed Interstate 10 reliever that would run from Arizona 85 to the proposed Loop 202.) . . . We need to work with Goodyear and Litchfield Park to come to a compromise for the final funding of the I-10 (accelerated widening) project, or the beginning funding if you want to put it more accurately. It needs to get done, and all three cities have to work together and not independently. The placement of the 801 is going to be crucial. If it is put into the wrong place, it will divide Avondale and really ruin the last master-planned community that we have.

**What would you change about Avondale?** Avondale has a higher than normal percentage of rental properties in the city, and that's only going to get worse when a lot of these people who got some of the subprime loans start walking away from their properties. It's really going to hurt, because Avondale was a hub of these investors coming in and buying four or five houses. I would change the amount of rental properties in Avondale and the absentee landlords. I served on an HOA for four years, and that was before the housing boom really happened a couple of years ago. So I would really like to work with them and say, "OK, what kind of problems are you having? Are you having a problem with crime because these

houses are vacant? Are you having a problem with landlords just walking away from their properties and the properties are getting run down? What do you need help with? What can the city change?" "

## Jim McDonald

**Age:** 42

**Family:** Wife, Lori, 39; son, Kyle, 15; and daughter, Kathryn, 14.

**How long have you lived in Avondale:** 2 1/2 years.

**Occupation:** Financial adviser for Edward Jones Investments.

**Education:** An associate's degree in electronics; a Series 7 and Series 63 license; and an accredited asset management specialist.

**Political experience:** Chairman of the Avondale Parks and Recreation Board; member of the Risk Management Board; and Avondale's representative to the Citizens Advisory Traffic Committee.

**Most significant issue facing Avondale:** Managing the growth of the city properly. That has many aspects to it. It's making sure the police are properly funded, the fire department is properly funded. And that the proper infrastructure goes in place, whether that be city employees, to make sure the parks have land before the land's gone and then too expensive, and managing the right mix of properties. Avondale is growing fast, and there are some growing pains, and we need to make sure we grow into the vision that we have.

**What would you change about Avondale?** The thing I'd like to change is the city as a whole has a north Avondale, south Avondale mind-set to it. I would really like to change that because people say, "The north side gets more things done; the south side gets more things done." I would really like to develop more of a feeling of a unified Avondale. One Avondale, not a north and a south. There are a lot of things in the current vision that I support, and some things that I would like to see get changed to make that happen.

## Stephanie Karlin

**Age:** 53

**Family:** Husband, Mario (Mike), one daughter.

**How long have you lived in Avondale:** 17 years. Southwest Valley resident for more than 27 years.

**Occupation:** Environmental compliance.

**Education:** Bachelor's degree in public health and a registered environmental health specialist. Post graduate in leadership and management.

**Political experience:** Avondale City Council member, 2000-2004.

**Most significant issue facing Avondale:** How can we encourage businesses that will provide employment to locate here? It is about economic sustainability. Avondale is competing with approximately 24 other cities in the Valley, and we need to identify what our niche is in order for us to attract businesses to locate in Avondale. As a council, we set the goals and vision for the city. I believe very strongly in working as a team so that we all are working towards common goals to making Avondale a quality community to not only work, but to live and to play. I believe quality communities achieve a balance between natural and man-made environments.

**What would you would change about Avondale?** Avondale is my home and we are evolving and going through growing pains. Although our progress and growth are wonderful, we need to encourage and promote the cultural roots and history of this community. I believe change not only transcends the past but includes the positive elements of our past, and we need to include those positive elements as we move forward. I have discovered that if we forget where we came from, we tend to not have a purposeful meaning.

**For additional election information, call the city clerk at (623) 333-1200.**

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